

FACT SHEET
FOR THE DISCHARGE OF TREATED GROUND WATER
FROM OIL CONTAMINATED GROUND WATER SOURCES
TO SURFACE OR GROUND WATERS OF THE STATE

General discharge permits are discharge permits issued for classes of discharges. These discharges are generally the result of a particular operation or treatment process and are very similar in effluent characteristics. Each general permit provides effluent limitations and conditions that the dischargers must meet, and is subject to the same enforcement actions as individual discharge permits to cover certain types of discharges and at the same time provide a service to the regulated community by reducing the time necessary to obtain a permit.

This general permit has been developed to address discharges of storm water discharges from storage tank diked and loading rack areas and hydrostatic test water from oil terminals. Both Federal (40 CFR 122) and State (COMAR 26.08.04) regulations require discharge permits for this activity. Specifically, State regulations require that discharges of any wastes or wastewater regardless of volume be authorized by a discharge permit. This applies to discharges to surface or ground waters. Federal regulations address discharges to surface waters only, requiring a permit for the discharge of pollutants. This permit does not cover discharges of industrial process wastewater from non-oil terminals. This permit does not cover discharges from oil terminals with a total aggregate tank capacity of at least 5 million gallons of oil, which have marine or pipeline transfer capabilities.

Until now, the Department has fulfilled this permitting obligation by means of individual permits. Because the discharges from this type of activity are similar and have been regulated by almost identical permit conditions, this class of discharges is appropriate for coverage under a general permit.

This permit authorizes the discharge of treated ground water from oil contaminated ground water sources to surface or ground waters of the State. Regulation of these discharges is required by the above-mentioned regulations. These effluents often have the potential to cause localized problems in the receiving waters. In addition, these regulations require quality control of all wastewaters by the best available treatment or pollution prevention technology, regardless of impact.

This permit sets numerical limits on the concentration of the petroleum product contamination following treatment of the storm water or hydrostatic test water. The limits based on what has been demonstrated to be technologically achievable. Self-monitoring is required to verify compliance. The permit also requires testing to verify that the discharges with a specified volume and duration be tested to verify that the discharge is not toxic to aquatic life, and if toxicity is present, the permit requires its elimination. This is a requirement of the Federal Clean Water Act. This permit also sets operations requirements, such as inspection routines.

Contact telephone number is (410) 537-3386 for any questions or further information.